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## ELEMENTS IN AN IMMIGRATION POLICY FOR THE UNITED STATES

### Assimilation and Governmental Regulation

By FRANK JULIAN WARNE, PH.D.<sup>1</sup>

Washington, D. C.

AUTHENTIC reports from Europe that emigrants by the hundreds of thousands are crowding all the embarkation ports and are overflowing all shipping facilities in their mad rush to the United States, coupled with the steady increase in the number of foreign-born arrivals on our shores since the close of the European War,<sup>2</sup> are evidence that the tide of immigration is setting in once more to the shores of the United States and that the American people are again confronted with this great national problem. But few realize the magnitude this immigrant invasion has assumed and still fewer appreciate its far-reaching effects upon the American people and nation, racially, socially, industrially and institutionally. A brief statistical survey of this tide as it has washed upon our shores the past one hundred years will assist in a comprehension of the tremendous increase in its volume prior to its temporary interruption by the European War.

A pictorial bird's eye view of this inflow of foreign born is given in the

accompanying chart, reproduced from Warne's *Book of Charts* and which is based upon statistics from the Bureau of Immigration of the United States Department of Labor. In the past one hundred years this immigration has comprised more than 33,200,000 human beings. From an inflow of less than 129,000 for the ten years following 1820 it increased to more than 8,200,000 for the decade ending with 1909. The war period greatly reduced this volume but even including those four years immigration for the decade closing with 1919 gave an inflow of more than 6,347,000. Here is an increase in the one hundred years from a decennial yearly average of 12,900 to nearly 635,000. The largest ten-year immigration was from 1905 to 1914, its volume exceeding 10,100,000. Of the total of more than 33,200,000 immigrants as many as 26,200,000, or 79 per cent, came during the past fifty years, and as great a proportion as 30 per cent of the total, or 10,122,000, during the ten years prior to the beginning of the European War.

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<sup>2</sup> More than 430,000 aliens arrived in the United States during the six months from January to July, 1920

The temporary effects of the war upon the volume of immigration are indicated in the fact that while it reached nearly 5,175,000, or a yearly average of more than 1,000,000, for the five years immediately preceding, it decreased to 1,173,000, or an average inflow of only 235,000, for the five years following 1914. This is nearly 36,000 less than that for the single year immediately preceding the beginning of hostilities. The lowest

number of arrivals in any one of these five years was 110,618 in 1918, the smallest yearly immigration since 1862 just preceding the beginning of the Civil War.

Our total immigration of more than 33,200,000 and the yearly average by decades during the past one hundred years are summarized in the following table. These figures are for immigrant aliens only and do not include non-immigrant arrivals; that is, those recorded as coming here for temporary purposes only and not for permanent residence. If the latter were included the totals would, of course, be much larger, especially for the more recent years before the war.

DECENNIAL IMMIGRATION THE PAST ONE  
HUNDRED YEARS

Decade	Total Immigration	Yearly Average for Decade
1820-1829	128,502	12,850
1830-1839	538,381	53,838
1840-1849	1,427,337	142,734
1850-1859	2,747,896	274,790
1860-1869	2,123,219	212,322
1870-1879	2,742,137	274,214
1880-1889	5,248,568	524,857
1890-1899	3,694,294	369,429
1900-1909	8,202,388	820,239
1910-1919	6,347,380	634,738

Not all the 33,200,000 immigrants are in the United States at the present time. Many have died and still others have emigrated. Our present foreign-born population is not yet known, the Bureau of the Census not having completed its tabulation of the last enumeration, but in 1910 there was a total foreign-born population in the United States of approximately 13,500,000 out of a total immigration down to that time of about 26,853,000.

While the figures in the preceding table impress one with the magnitude of the volume of immigration, at the same time they smooth out the differ-

ences in the inflow from year to year and at different periods of time. By studying the yearly figures in the table of the accompanying chart and relating them to events of industrial or economic history, we are able to understand what is probably the most significant of all the operating forces or influences at work behind this great movement of population across the Atlantic.

For illustration, the number of immigrant arrivals strikingly decreased from nearly 428,000 in 1854 to 200,877 the following year, a decrease of more than one-half. This falling off reflected the effects of the greatest financial panic ever experienced in the history of the United States up to that time. The ensuing industrial depression was followed closely by the Civil War, and it was not until 1873 that the yearly inflow again reached as large a volume, the number being nearly 460,000. The year 1873 marks another panic, and a striking decrease the following years in the number of alien arrivals is again recorded. Beginning in the early eighties and accompanying increasing prosperity in all of our industries, the volume of immigration steadily increased until this tendency was interrupted by the panic of 1893. The financial disturbance in this country in 1907 was similarly followed by a striking decrease in immigration.

This close relation between industrial depression and decrease in immigration on the one hand and industrial prosperity and increase in immigration on the other is the economic explanation of the periodic waves of immigration that have washed our shores since 1820, and particularly so in more recent years. It points unmistakably to the economic characteristics of this great movement of population and to the fact that by far the greater part of it is due to the indus-

# THE TIDE OF IMMIGRATION

DURING THE PAST 100 YEARS

Year Number of  
Immigrants

1820 8,385  
1821 9,127  
1822 6,911  
1823 6,354  
1824 7,912  
1825 10,199  
1826 10,837  
1827 18,875  
1828 27,382  
1829 22,520

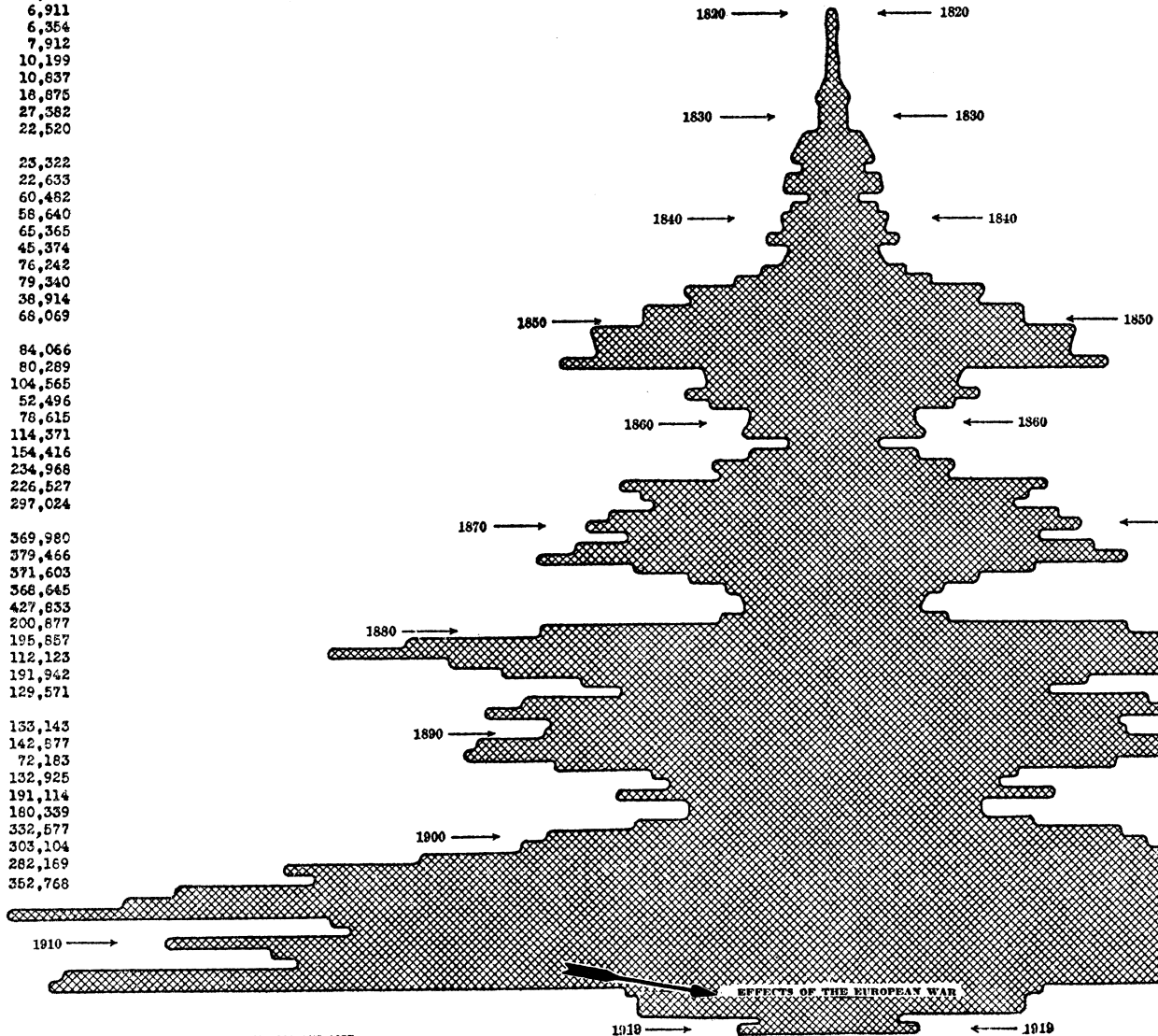
1830 23,322  
1831 22,633  
1832 60,462  
1833 58,640  
1834 65,365  
1835 45,374  
1836 76,242  
1837 79,340  
1838 38,914  
1839 68,069

1840 84,066  
1841 80,289  
1842 104,565  
1843 52,496  
1844 78,615  
1845 114,371  
1846 154,416  
1847 234,968  
1848 226,527  
1849 297,024

1850 369,980  
1851 379,466  
1852 371,603  
1853 368,645  
1854 427,833  
1855 200,877  
1856 195,857  
1857 112,123  
1858 191,942  
1859 129,571

1860 133,143  
1861 142,577  
1862 72,183  
1863 132,925  
1864 191,114  
1865 180,339  
1866 332,577  
1867 303,104  
1868 282,169  
1869 352,768

## IMMIGRATION INTO THE UNITED STATES



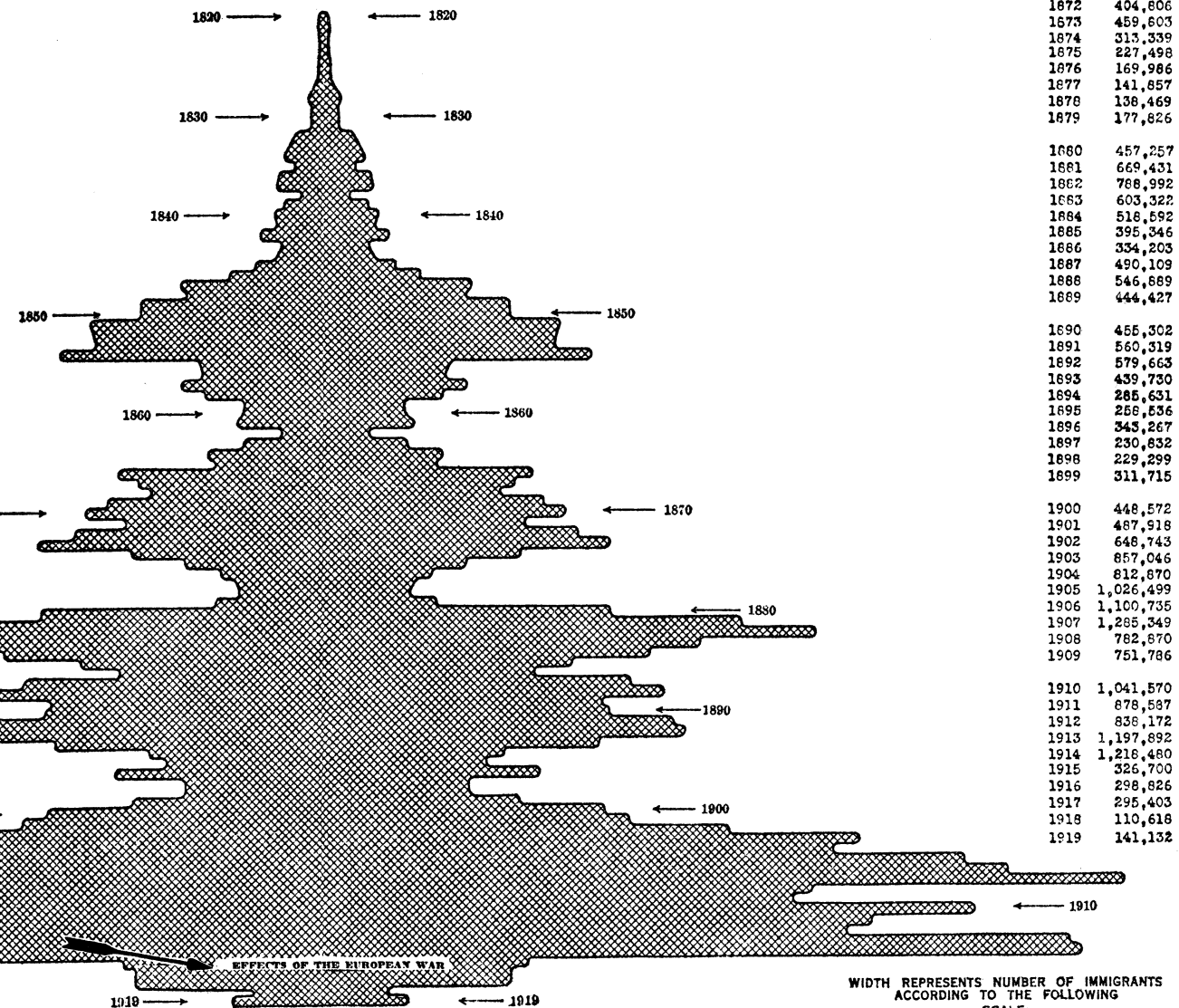
\*FIGURES DENOTING IMMIGRATION FOR THE YEARS 1832, 1843, 1850, AND 1857 REPRESENT RESPECTIVELY 15 MONTH, 9 MONTH, 15 MONTH, AND 6 MONTH PERIODS, WHILE 12 MONTH PERIODS FOR THOSE YEARS HAVE BEEN APPROXIMATED IN THE GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION

Statistics from Report of United States Bureau of Immigration

# THE TIDE OF IMMIGRATION

DURING THE PAST 100 YEARS

## IMMIGRATION INTO THE UNITED STATES



trial demand in the United States for labor. According to the 1914 Annual Report of the Commissioner-General of Immigration:

It is interesting to note the successive periodical increases, receding less each time coincident with the periods of financial depression, only to reach to a greater height with the next ascending wave. . . . The three periods of depression following 1857, 1873, and 1893 stand out prominently, and the 1907 financial and commercial depression caused the wave line to drop to a marked degree. This periodical rise and fall well represents the relative prosperity of the country.

This industrial demand for labor which is met most largely by immigration is for the rough, unskilled, or "common" kind, nearly 60 per cent of all incoming aliens being males without trained skill and lacking even the rudiments of an education.

This raises a hundred and one questions that in recent years have come to vex the American people. Can they continue to build a safe democracy not out of such material but out of too great a supply of such material?

Assimilation of the immigrant into American life in all its aspects—and no other consummation of the presence among us of the foreign born should be entertained—rests primarily upon the opportunity for continuous employment in a gainful occupation at a wage sufficient at least to supply him and those dependent upon him with the necessities for physical existence. A needy alien in the United States out of work is not only retarded in assimilation but he also hinders or obstructs the operation of the forces of assimilation themselves. With continuous employment at a living wage the typical immigrant becomes an asset to all concerned and not a liability either to himself or to other workers or to the American people. Only that number

of immigrants, then, should be permitted to enter at any one time for which there is opportunity for such employment without depriving those already here, foreign born as well as native, of similar opportunity. The facts as to the existence of such a condition can be fairly accurately ascertained, as I have already suggested before the American Academy of Political and Social Science and the National Civic Federation, by the organization of federal governmental machinery for measuring the anticipated demand of our industries for unskilled workers at the prevailing American rate of wages.

This is the theory of immigration control upon which is based the principle of governmental regulation that will restrict it within the limits of an assimilative supply. Its foundation rests upon that view of American life which believes that the alien must become at the earliest possible moment an indistinguishable part of American society. It is not superficial sentimentality, neither is it misguided or humbug philanthropy; it is not based on economic exploitation of the alien by emphasizing his contribution to production. It is fundamentally humanitarian in that it seeks the ultimate welfare of both the immigrant and the American people.

This view it is now necessary to emphasize because the effects flowing out of the European War have brought to public attention with startling suddenness, like the rapid shifting of scenes on a moving-picture screen, aspects of immigration which heretofore have been regarded with unruffled complacency. We have been made conscious of the existence among us, in spirit as well as in name, of the hyphenated American—of the German-American, the Italian-American, and so on. We have found that our much

boasted forces for assimilating the foreign-born element have not been working as efficaciously as our optimistic ignorance of the facts had led us to believe. We have learned through sad experience that these forces need intelligent attention and direction; we have been taught that they must be given greater vigor if we are to become a homogeneous people and thus escape the danger of an internal division among ourselves. Of even greater importance, possibly, is the fact that there are millions of alien subjects among us who have not become and who do not intend to become American citizens.

In consequence of all this, as a nation and as a people we must now consciously and intelligently face a wholly new group of problems arising out of immigration. These problems are inextricably interwoven into our national destiny; they are a part of the working out of our democratic institutions; their solution depends upon our powers of economic and social assimilation. For many years to come the American people should solve every problem of immigration from the point of view of its relation to or its effect upon this assimilative ability. Our eyes should henceforth be focused upon this one solution; all other aspects of immigration should be made subordinate to it. It should consciously become of the very greatest importance to us as a people that the immigrants whom we welcome into our society to participate in the blessings and duties of our institutions should be an integral part of that society and not foreign to it. This view safeguards the permanent welfare of the alien who comes here to become a homogeneous part of us as well as the welfare of the people of the United States themselves.

There is abundant evidence that this view is coming to be that of the American people. It is reflected in the pass-

age by Congress of the literacy test over the Presidential veto and in the present activities of innumerable societies and organizations which are being directed towards the Americanization of the alien. Manufacturers' associations, labor unions, religious bodies, societies of foreign born, boards of education, state and city Americanization departments or boards, the War and Interior Departments of the National Government, women's clubs, colleges and universities, libraries, community centers and service organizations, civic committees, the Boy Scouts of America, the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, Knights of Columbus, American Red Cross, and a host of similar organizations are now engaged in this laudable and very necessary work if America is to mean to the immigrant and the immigrant is to mean to America all that is necessary and vital to a homogeneous people. Recently a four days' session of an Americanization Conference was held in Washington under the auspices of the federal Department of the Interior.

While there may be differences as to the meaning of Americanization and disputes as to the best means to be employed to attain it, the principle of assimilation should be the fundamental rule of measurement to be applied to immigration generally as well as to any particular racial group within the immigration stream. It should be the basis of any additional legislation on immigration by Congress. Our more than one hundred years' experience of the effects of immigration has taught us the racial groups that do not assimilate American customs and do not become a homogeneous part of our population. Then, again, we know without question that if those who do assimilate more or less readily under favorable conditions are permitted to

enter in too great a volume they are certain to disarrange the assimilating process. If the volume of total immigration is likely at any time to become so large as to make ineffective our forces of assimilation, then this volume

should be decreased by restrictive measures; if the elements comprising any particular group or race, no matter how few in number relatively, are unassimilable into our American life then these too should be restricted.

## The Industrial Significance of Immigration

By W. JETT LAUCK<sup>1</sup>

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**D**URING President Roosevelt's administration the Congress established an Immigration Commission and provided it liberally with funds so that it might make a satisfactory inquiry into all phases of the immigration problem. It was composed of three members selected from each branch of the Congress, and three representatives of the general public named by the President. This body began its work in 1907 and submitted its voluminous report three years later. The original investigation which was conducted as to the economic aspects of immigration included within its scope all the basic industries of the country. All phases of the industrial significance of immigration were exhaustively studied and analyzed. The final conclusions and recommendations which were based on this inquiry may be said to be representative and entirely acceptable for the period immediately preceding the war. They were, in brief, as follows:

1. While the American people, as in the past, welcome the oppressed of other lands, care should be taken that immigration be such both in quality and quantity so as not to make too difficult the process of assimilation.

2. Since the existing law and further special legislation recommended in this re-

port deal with the physically and morally unfit, further general legislation concerning the admission of aliens should be based primarily upon economic or business considerations touching the prosperity and economic well-being of our people.

3. The measure of the rational, healthy development of a country is not the extent of its investment of capital, its output of products, or its exports and imports, unless there is a corresponding economic opportunity afforded to the citizen dependent upon employment for his material, mental and moral development.

4. The development of business may be brought about by means which lower the standard of living of the wage-earners. A slow expansion of industry which would permit the adaption and assimilation of the incoming labor supply is preferable to a very rapid industrial expansion which results in the immigration of laborers of low standards and efficiency, who imperil the American standard of wages and conditions of employment.

\* \* \* \* \*

8. The investigations of the Commission show an oversupply of unskilled labor in basic industries to an extent which indicates an oversupply of unskilled labor in the industries of the country as a whole, a condition which demands legislation restricting the further admission of such unskilled labor.

It is desirable in making the restriction that—

(a) A sufficient number be debarred to produce a marked effect upon the present supply of unskilled labor.

<sup>1</sup>Author of: *The Immigration Problem* (with Prof. J. W. Jenks) (1911); *Reports of U. S. Immigration Commission*, Vols. IV-XVIII,—The Editor.